

IN THE CLAIMS

1. 1-10 (cancelled)

11. (new) A copolymer for use in or as a polymeric binder for an intumescent coating comprising: a blend of a Newtonian copolymer and a reticulated copolymer, wherein said blend of Newtonian copolymer and reticulated copolymers includes at least one substituted styrene and at least one substituted acrylate comprising p-methylstyrene and 2-ethylhexylacrylate.

12. (new) The copolymer of claim 11, wherein said reticulated copolymer is a thixotropic copolymer and/or a pseudo-plastic copolymer.

13. (new) The copolymer of claim 11 or 12, wherein the p-methylstyrene/2-ethylhexylacrylate ratio is between 100/0 to 50/50.

14. (new) The copolymer of claim 13, wherein the p-methylstyrene/2-ethylhexylacrylate ratio is 90/10.

15. (new) The copolymer of claim 14, wherein the p-methylstyrene/2-ethylhexylacrylate ratio is 80/20.

16. (new) The copolymer of claim 15, wherein the p-methylstyrene/2-ethylhexylacrylate ratio is 75/25.

17. (new) The copolymer of any one of claim 11 or 12, wherein said blend further comprises p-tert-butyl styrene and/or isobutylmethacrylate.

18. (new) The copolymer of claim 11 or 12, wherein said Newtonian copolymer and said reticulated copolymer are obtained by emulsion polymerization.

19. (new) An intumescent coating comprising the copolymer of claim 11 or 12.

20. (new) The intumescent coating of claim 19, further comprising a foam-forming substance, a carbon forming substance and a conventional additive.

21. (new) The intumescent coating of claim 20, wherein said foam-forming substance is an ammonium salt of phosphoric acid.

22. (new) The intumescent coating of claim 20, wherein said carbon forming substance is pentaerythritol, dipentaerythritol, tripentaerythritol and/or polycondensate of pentaerythritol.

23. (new) The intumescent coating of claim 20, wherein said intumescent coating is water based or solvent based.

24. (new) A method of making the intumescent coating of claim 19 comprising the steps of:

- (a) dissolving Newtonian copolymer and reticulated copolymer in either solvent or in water to form a mixture;
- (b) optionally adding chlorinated paraffin to said mixture,
- (c) homogenizing said mixture, and
- (d) adding an additive.